

Overview

NASM/AFAA Certification Governing Board Responsibilities

National Academy of Sports Medicine

Athletics and Fitness Association of America

Thank you for considering how you may be involved as a member of the NASM/AFAA Certification Governing Board (Board) or (CGB). Some of the following content is excerpted from the NASM/AFAA Certification Governing Board Member Handbook which is required reading if you are approved as a new board member.

What NASM and AFAA Does

The [National Academy of Sports Medicine](#) (NASM) offers nationally recognized learning tools and certifications for the health and fitness and personal trainer industries. NASM is responsible for designing assessment tools that are psychometrically sound, follow industry accepted standards and appropriately assess the minimum competencies identified by the profession. NASM awards credentials to those who meet the eligibility standards and successfully challenge NASM's certification examinations.

At the end of 2015, NASM acquired the Aerobics and Fitness Association of America (AFAA). Following the acquisition, the full name of AFAA was changed to [Athletics and Fitness Association of America](#). NASM and AFAA now operate as two business entities, each with their own websites and identities. Both organizations have their operations and sales headquarters in one location in Arizona.

NASM and AFAA Programs Offered

Since its founding, NASM has offered certification for personal trainers and awarded the Certified Personal Trainer (NASM-CPT) credential. The NASM-CPT certification is accredited through 11/30/2021 by the [National Commission for Certifying Agencies](#) (NCCA), a division of the Institute for Credentialing Excellence.

The launching of a new certification program by AFAA, the AFAA Certified Group Fitness Instructor (AFAA-CGFI), was started in 2016 and in July 2017 was granted NCCA accreditation through 6/30/2022.

In addition to fitness certification programs, NASM offers advanced specializations, such as Performance Enhancement Specialist (PES), Corrective Exercise Specialist (CES), and Group Fitness Instructor programs. NASM offers more than 20 continuing education courses in a variety of disciplines and a myriad of solutions including fitness education partnerships and professional consulting. In 2019 NASM began offering a NASM Certified Nutrition Coach (NASM-CNC) credential that does not have nor is seeking NCCA accreditation.

In addition to the AFAA-CGFI credential, AFAA also offers a certification in personal fitness training as well as other certifications focused on indoor cycling, that does not have nor is seeking NCCA accreditation. Further, AFAA offers workshops, specialties, and courses for exercise professionals.

The Purpose of the Certification Governing Board

The purpose of the CGB is to establish the standards, policies and procedures for the development and administration of the certification programs under the Board's governance and grant public recognition, by the awarding of a credential, to candidates who have demonstrated that they have met the defined criteria for the award of the credential and for certified individuals that have fulfilled the recertification requirements. Currently, the two certification activities are for the NASM Certified Personal Trainer (NASM-CPT) certification program and the AFAA Certified Group Fitness Instructor (AFAA-CGFI) certification program. Others may be added in the future.

Board Election and Representation

The Board is comprised of eight members. The Board membership includes three group fitness instructor representatives, three personal trainer representatives, one representative of the industry, and one public member. With respect to both personal trainer and group fitness instructor membership, an effort is made to have at least one person represent the practitioner and at least one person represent employers of practitioners.

Board members are elected by the CGB on a staggered schedule. Elected Board members serve three-year terms. Up to three consecutive terms may be served by a member. A listing of current board members and the year their current term expires is at <https://www.nasm.org/about/nasm-certification-governing-board>.

Board members have the opportunity to serve on the CGB Disciplinary and Appeals Committee and on special projects or ad hoc committees.

Board Member Responsibilities

Annual Training: Board members are expected to complete the annual training provided by the Executive Director, delivered either as part of individual training or during a Board meeting.

Meeting Attendance: Meetings occur typically three times a year but may occur more frequently as business needs dictate occur via teleconference for 30-60 minutes on a date when a quorum can be convened. One meeting every other year may occur in person; reasonable travel expenses are covered for each member attending. The previous in-person meeting was in 2018 held immediately prior to the Optima Conference. The in-person meeting planned for 2020 was postponed until 2021 due to COVID-19 travel restrictions.

Set Certification Policies and Procedures as Required by Accreditors: The CGB is required to establish certification policies and procedures consistent with the accreditation standards of any accreditation organization used by NASM or AFAA, including [NCCA Standards](#).

Oversight of Exam Development: The CGB reviews and approves the recommendations of psychometricians for periodic updates of each certification exam offered by NASM and AFAA. This includes the qualifications of subject matter experts involved in the exam development process, the Practice Analysis to identify knowledge or skills that are minimally necessary to enter practice in the field, the exam blueprint which details the broad scope of what will be covered on the certification exam, and the passing standard or “cut score” which is the score at or above which the candidate is deemed to have passed the exam and thus earns the credential. Specific training in each of these processes is provided to Board members.

Establishing Certification Program Policies: The CGB sets policies and procedures for the certification programs as contemplated by the NCCA standards, including the polices concerning candidate eligibility, exam development, administration and proctoring of examinations, scoring and reporting of assessments, recertification, exam security, and disciplinary actions and appeals. The policies and procedures established by the Board are documented in the NASM/AFAA Certification Policies & Procedures, a separate document that is provided as part of training.

Fiduciary Duties: Each Board member owes certain fiduciary duties to the Board and the stakeholders. Each member agrees to adhere to the fiduciary duties and other obligations through an agreement, executed before joining the Board. The agreement provides more details on what is required.

- **Duty of Care:** This duty requires each Board member to act in good faith and to exercise his/her duties in a reasonable and prudent manner.

- **Duty of Loyalty:** This duty requires Board members to put the interest of the certification program and its stakeholders above their own, avoiding conflicts of interest, such as any business, personal, financial, or organizational interests and affiliations that are or could be construed to be a conflict of interest.
- **Duty of Confidentiality:** This duty requires that Board members respect the importance and sensitivity of information before the Board.
- **Duty of Obedience:** The duty of obedience requires that Board members act in support of the certification program's mission and objectives.

Selection and Election Process

Vacancies: With an eight-member board with each member serving a three-year term for as many as three consecutive terms, vacancies occur periodically as members leave the board. Efforts are made to avoid vacancies of more than one or two each year.

Recruitment: Recruitment focuses on the special needs and qualifications for an open position, but résumés are accepted at any time for later consideration should an opening occur or for special projects.

Application: If upon reading this information you have an interest in serving on the CGB, please submit your résumé and a letter of interest. If you meet the minimum qualifications, you will be asked to complete a screening form of about 11 questions. A different form with more questions is used by applicants to become a public member. This form is available upon request at any time.

Approval: The Board Chair, in cooperation with the Executive Director, will present qualified applicant(s) to the CGB for election to the Board. The newly elected Board members will receive more information, including the Board Member Agreement required to be signed before becoming a member of the Board.

Term: As noted above, Board members typically serve three-year terms, starting on January 1 of the year following election. When a member is elected to fill a mid-term vacancy (such as when a member resigns from the Board early), the newly elected member will complete the prior member's term, starting on the date he/she executes the Board Member Agreement. Such member will stand for re-election in December of the year in which the prior member's term would have expired.

More Information

For more information or to submit your résumé with an interest in serving, please contact Douglas Viehland, Executive Director-Certifications at douglas.viehland@ascendlearning.com or 913-661-6435.